

Headshop drugs across Europe: data from the EMCDDA



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New and emerging substances

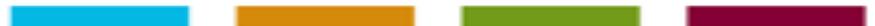
- New psychoactive substances and new patterns of drug use can have important public health and policy implications
- Difficult to detect
- Emerge at low levels and in specific localities or among restricted subgroups of the population





Detecting new and emerging substances

- European Union's early-warning system
 - EMCDDA
 - 1995 - joint action agreed by the European Council
 - 2005- Council Decision 2005/387/JHA
- NACD's Early Warning Committee in Ireland





Types of emerging substances

- Since 2007- more than 90 substances have been reported through the EMCDDA's early-warning system
 - 1980's Fentanyl
 - Late 1980's Phenethylamines
 - Early 1990s Tryptamines
 - Early 2000's Piperazines
 - More recently cathion derivatives synthetic cannabinoid , and indigenous plants





European surveys of headshops

- Internet has emerged as a new marketplace for psychoactive substances
- Two surveys 2008 and 2009
- 68 on line shops in 2008 and 115 in 2009
- 17 countries in 2009
- UK, Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Romania





Products available

- Advertised as legal highs or herbal highs, but often synthetic chemicals
- More than 200 psychoactive substances available
- Contents on packing do not always match contents when chemically analysed





Spice

- 'Spice' products were offered for sale by 48% of the retailers surveyed in 2009
- 14 Countries, UK, Ireland, Latvia and Romania
- Banned in five countries
- Alternatives have already appeared





BZP

- Many online retailers were offering BZP-free 'party pills'
- 1-(4-fluorophenyl) piperazine (pFPP)
- meta Chlorophenylpiperazine (mCPP)





Cathinone

- Six of the 13 new drugs contained cathinone
- Chemical stimulant found in the shrub Khat
- Methcathinone (MCAT) Methylmethcathinone (Mephedrone), and Methedrone
- Use can become compulsive and can create a state of psychological dependence
- Sold as bath salts and the user inhale the vapour to get a high
- Mephedrone has been linked to two deaths in Sweden in 2008.





Examples of responses

- Spice
 - Germany used emergency narcotics legislation to control for 1 year.
 - France classified them as narcotics
 - Austria used its medicines act
 - Luxembourg decided to control them as psychotropic substances.
 - Poland amended their narcotic law
 - The UK are in the process of controlling synthetic cannabinoids found in 'spice' products
- BZP was declared a controlled drug
- The UK has completed an update on current knowledge about Mephedrone

